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O. Piatnitsky

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URGENT QUESTIONS OF THE DAY



By O. PIATNITSKY

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This pamphlet is a slightly revised and abbreviated report of a speech delivered by Comrade O. PIATNITSKY, on the first item of the Agenda of the XI Plenum of the E.C.C.I. on March 31st, 1931.

O. PIATNITSKY

**URGENT QUESTIONS
OF THE DAY**

Unemployed Movement
Factory Organization
Fluctuating Membership

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URGENT QUESTIONS

COMRADES, I wish to deal with three questions : (1) the question of unemployment, *i.e.*, the unemployed movement ; (2) to what extent have we consolidated ourselves in the factories ; and (3) the fluctuations and the causes of the fluctuations.

I. WORK AMONG THE UNEMPLOYED

Abstract Slogans

As a consequence of capitalist rationalization carried out at the expense of the working class, structural unemployment was already rife in the principal capitalist countries in 1928 and 1929, when the boom was still at its height. But when the world economic crisis broke out unemployment reached unprecedented dimensions.

All the hopes of the bourgeois and Social-Democratic economists that there would be a seasonal improvement and that unemployment would diminish in the spring of 1931 proved vain. On the contrary, after a slight drop in the number of unemployed in the beginning of the spring, unemployment is now greater in some countries than it was in January, 1931. Hence unemployment at the present time is not a passing phenomenon, and for that reason the Communist Parties, the Red trade unions and the trade union oppositions must work energetically among the unemployed. This has not been done up till now. In spite of the fact that there are three or four times more unemployed this year than last year, the demonstrations on February 25th in almost all countries, except Germany, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland and Austria, were worse than last year. This was stated by Comrade Manuilsky in his report, and the comrades who have spoken up to the present have not refuted it.

What is the reason ? There are many reasons. The chief of them, I think, are as follows : The abstractness of our agitational slogans, the absence of organization, while those organizations which exist were chiefly occupied with the organization of demonstrations. Work among the unemployed was not of a concrete nature which could organize the unemployed and attach them to the Communist Parties for a long time. I will try to prove this.

Take the slogans of some of the Parties. Here are the slogans of the American Party : "*Work or wages.*" I must say that, if I were unemployed and in America, I probably should not have understood this slogan.

(Losovsky : And in Moscow you understood it ?—*Laughter.*)

In Moscow ! I know that if a worker in the U.S.S.R. is unemployed he receives unemployment pay. I know this very well.

(MANUILSKY: Even the R.I.L.U. does not understand this slogan.—*Laughter.*)

But this is not all. Look at the second slogan: "*Don't starve—fight.*" I think that few people wish to starve, even in America. It is true that they can improve their situation by means of a collective fight, but there is no need to be so niggardly with words.

The third slogan, "*Fight for the seven-hour day and the five-day-week,*" was right. But there was not the addition "*no reduction in wages.*" In what way does the slogan, the last part of it, differ from reformist slogans? In America particularly this slogan was dangerous. Why was it dangerous? Because in America there are many groups even among the bourgeoisie who say: "Let the workers work two or three days a week, so as to give the unemployed a job." Would the bourgeoisie lose anything from this? No! They would only gain. Every two or three days in the week a new worker would be at work, efficiency would increase two or three times and wages would remain as before, that is, only for two or three days' work. This would be an actual worsening of the conditions of the working class, reducing it to pauperism. Our Party issued the proper slogan, "*Fight for the seven-hour day,*" and added also "*the five-day week.*" How should the worker know that, while proposing a five-day week, a three-day week should not be proposed? This is of great importance for America.

The fourth slogan. At the Plenum in November, Comrade Klein, at a session of the C.C. of the Party, illustrated how the election campaign was carried on by the Party agitators. He said: "Our candidates are recommended to the workers as follows: The chief question is social insurance. It is true that this law can only be carried out under the dictatorship of the proletariat, but nevertheless we want the workers to vote for us."

I do not know what comrades in America mean by social insurance. In all probability, only under the dictatorship of the proletariat will it be possible to carry out insurance which will be exclusively at the expense of the employers without payments by the workers, and the workers will receive full wages during illness, disablement, unemployment, etc. This is correct, of course. But some kind of insurance can be introduced under the bourgeois system. In France recently a system of insurance was introduced which was so bad that the workers went on strike against it, but it was insurance.

Unfortunately, such abstract slogans were in evidence not only on the unemployed question. Comrade Foster, at the same Plenum, stated that "during the miners' strikes which took place recently there were such slogans as 'A Labour and Farmers' Government,' 'Nationalization of the Mines,' and nothing about the immediate demands of the striking workers." It is hardly likely that the Party can lead strikes with such slogans.

The question of charity in America plays a great rôle, because there is no insurance in America and assistance is chiefly received

from charity. I have examined all the slogans and have not found one either for or against charitable assistance, and in the agitation they blankly oppose charity, which cannot attract to the Communist Party of the U.S.A. those destitute unemployed who are compelled to appeal to philanthropic societies for bread, rotten coffee and help for their children.

Passing on to the British Communist Party, one slogan for February 25th was : "Workers and Unemployed, Organize." This slogan seems to be right. In my opinion they wanted to say something else : "Workers and Unemployed, Fight Together." But, as this was not explained, the slogan was abstract.

The second slogan was : "More Relief for the Unemployed." You cannot ask for "more" in this way. You have to say how much for each group. As far as I know, in England matters are different from those in Germany. In England every one receives the same dole independently of his qualifications or wages. Maybe I am wrong.

(REMMELE : The unemployed in Germany are divided into several categories.)

Yes, in Germany things are quite different. In Germany the dole is paid according to the size of the wages. In Germany the workers pay and they receive according to their wages. But in England, as far as I know, men without a family receive 17s. ; for their wife they get 9s., and for every child they receive 2s.

(ARNOT : We demand more.)

Very well, more—say, 5s. for each child instead of 2s. You should have said concretely how many shillings more. "More" can mean anything. "More" might be three times more than full wages. That would also be "more."

The third slogan : "Repudiate the War Debts." This is a fine thing, of course, if it had been linked up with, let us say, such demands as : let the workers refuse to pay dues to the insurance fund, extend insurance to railroad workers, office workers and agricultural workers, and take the money from those sums which you will not pay on the war debts. But the bare slogan "Repudiate War Debts" does not add anything from the point of view of influence on the masses.

There is another abstract slogan. At first I crossed it out, but after Comrade Pollitt's speech I think that it can be included among the abstract slogans which are incomprehensible for the masses. After Snowden's speech on the necessity of reducing the unemployed dole our Party put forward the slogan : "Workers, Fight Against the Government of Starvation and Slavery." If they had added "in India, Egypt, etc.," maybe the workers would have understood. But Comrade Pollitt yesterday argued for a long time to prove that many workers still consider the "Labour" Government to be the best they could have under the present conditions.

If the British comrades come to the British workers at the present time with this slogan of "the Government of Starvation and Slavery," it seems to me that they will not be understood. The British workers

are not starving to the same extent as the Indian workers. Obviously we must give such slogans as will draw in the workers, mobilize them for the struggle, so that they will understand them so that these slogans will attract them to our Party.

I pass on to the slogans of Czecho-Slovakia. Their first slogan was "Bread, Work, and All Power to the Workers." (*Laughter.*) What is wrong here? Of course, everything is right. But can you attract the workers with it? I am convinced that it was not by this slogan that the Party achieved its successes among the unemployed. "Organize the Proletarian Counter-Attack in Town and Village." How is the counter-attack to be organized? By demonstrations, strikes, or by something else?

Before the fascist demonstrations in Prague the following slogan was put forward: "Long Live the International Solidarity of the Toiling People in Town and Village."

I must say that I have examined all the slogans of the German C.P. on the question of the election campaign and the unemployment campaign. All the slogans were undoubtedly correct. Only during the metal workers' strike I found one slogan which seems to me to be not quite correct. There was a slogan, "Kick Brüning's Social-Democrats out of the Strike Committees." This was during a strike. The tactics of the United Front from below demand that the Social-Democratic workers be brought into the Strike Committees, but, of course, not in such numbers as would put them in the majority. However, such a slogan could be interpreted to mean that we must not elect Social-Democrats to, but throw them out of, the Strike Committees. I think this slogan was wrong.

(REMMELE: This slogan was wrong.)

Take the slogans for February 25th, 1931, printed in the manifesto of the C.P. of France. The first was "Against Reactionary Oppression," the second "Against Fascist Preparations," the third "Organize by Sending Masses of Unemployed Workers into the C.G.T.U., by the Best of Them Joining the C.P.F." How? The unemployed, apparently, will themselves choose which of them are the best, so as to attract them to the Party. The fourth slogan was "Employed Workers, Unite, Elect Your Delegates, Present Your Demands to the Employers, Quit Work to Support Your Delegates, Demonstrate in the Factories and Strike under the Slogan: 'Not One Centime Reduction in Wages!'" Can we present to all factories and all the unemployed such a slogan as "Elect Delegates and Present Demands"? Can we? In my opinion we cannot. This is an abstract slogan, absolutely not adapted to the situation. But this slogan is also repeated in the manifesto of the C.G.T.U. on February 25th. An addition is made to the last slogan which I read: "Organize Demonstrations near the Factory Gates and the Factories Together with the Unemployed. Committees of the Unemployed, Organize Street Demonstrations on February 25th." You would think that they had not enough paper. They appeal to the employed with the

same slogans as to the unemployed. Slogans are the ideological side of the work among the unemployed. The slogans of the Party make it possible to agitate for it, to penetrate among the masses. Slogans differ from other forms of agitation because they are short, but they must be so clear that every one who receives them will understand them. From the point of view of the ideological preparation of the unemployed campaign there were many failures in many Communist Parties. Evidently the method of agitation will have to be changed here.

I have given only a few of the slogans issued by five legal Parties. In other Sections of the C.I. the slogans were often just as abstract. Such abstract slogans cannot attract the broad masses of the unemployed to our side.

The Need for Various Methods of Work Among the Unemployed

I will pass on to another question—the question of whether we can work among the unemployed in general, among all the unemployed in all countries. There would be no harm in working among all the unemployed if we have the forces and the necessary apparatus, and if we can take them all in. But we can see, and we all know, that our Parties do not possess all these factors. Therefore, in my opinion, we must differentiate the work among the unemployed. There are unemployed who are badly provided for, and there are unemployed who are more or less well provided for.

I will try to show this by figures. According to official figures, in Germany, on January 1st, 1931, there were 4,357,000 unemployed. These are official figures; the number was really greater. Out of them, 2,155,000 unemployed men and women received the unemployment dole, 667,000 received the crisis dole (the crisis dole is considerably smaller than the usual unemployment dole). 1,535,000 unemployed were compelled to apply for charity. Even the bourgeois papers state that over 700,000 of them did not receive any dole at all. In Poland and Czecho-Slovakia a very insignificant number of unemployed receive unemployment pay.

Even in Britain there are many sections, such as railroad men and agricultural workers, who do not receive the dole. In Britain, there are 300,000 to 400,000 unemployed who for various reasons have been removed from the lists of those due to receive the unemployment dole. Would it not be better for us to try to organize those unemployed who are worse off, although they are much more difficult to organize? For instance, take Germany. If you can organize those people on the labour exchange who receive the dole, and even those who are compelled to apply for charity to the municipality (they can be organized), it is nevertheless extremely difficult to organize the people who do not receive anything in either of these places. They have to be sought for and captured, and a special apparatus is necessary for this.

But, on the other hand, if this category of unemployed were organized (something has been done for them already, of course), the Communist Parties could penetrate deeply among the unemployed proletariat, deeply among these masses. Therefore I think that maybe we should raise the question of the differentiation of work among the unemployed, owing to the fact that the Communist Parties have not sufficient forces to work everywhere among the unemployed, because up to the present we have on our side maybe 5 per cent. of all the unemployed, even according to the most optimistic statistics of the Parties themselves.

Good and Bad Work Among the Unemployed

Now I wish to give two examples which show what successes can be attained when we work among the unemployed, and how the Communist Parties lose influence among the unemployed, and also among the employed, if they work badly or not at all.

The first example is that of Czecho-Slovakia. I think that I need not deal in great detail with the work of the C.P.Cz. among the unemployed. Comrade Gottwald yesterday spoke of this in detail, but, nevertheless, I wish to give some figures about their work. During the course of two weeks—in January and the beginning of February—the C.P.Cz. organized and carried on in thirteen districts a total of 255 demonstrations and meetings, with about 68,000 participants. Not all the districts have yet given information about this campaign. In all districts (not only during these two weeks, but for the whole time) the C.P.Cz. made demands through the unemployed in 494 municipalities and communes. In most of the municipalities and communes the unemployed received assistance in money, food, fuel, etc. The Congress of the unemployed which took place not long ago was sufficiently wide. There were 982 delegates, of whom 385 were members of Red trade unions; there were 105 belonging to reformist trade unions, and 492 unorganized workers; 577 unemployed committees were represented. The Congress of the unemployed adopted a platform of demands for the unemployed which had been prepared by the C.P.Cz. and the Red trade unions. If the C.P.Cz. has obtained great successes among the unemployed, it is owing to this good and painstaking work. Therefore in Czecho-Slovakia this year the demonstrations on February 25th were not only bigger and better than last year, but the C.P.Cz. and the Red trade unions increased their membership by 5000 to 6000.

To take another example—America. Last year, according to all figures, including those given in the bourgeois papers, 1,250,000 persons took part in the unemployed demonstrations of March 6th, 1930. Last year there were no unemployed organizations in America. When the unemployed heard that there is a party which fights for their demands they responded on a large scale. This year, according to exaggerated figures (I emphasize that the figures are exaggerated),

about 300,000 persons took part in the unemployed demonstrations. We should further note that last year the number of unemployed in America was half as many as this year.

What is the cause? Allow me to read you a document which was sent from one district to the C.C. of the Party. After the November Plenum of the C.C. in 1930 Comrade Darcy was sent to work to District 13, California, and on January 12th he wrote to the C.C. from San Francisco as follows:

"For the past few weeks our chief task has been to convince our comrades here that they must really begin serious unemployment work. Up till now their concentration has been upon Skid Road *exclusively*. This holds true for San Francisco, Oakland, Los Angeles and Sacramento. In the other towns there was not any unemployment work done at all. When I proposed concrete forms of activity against the effects of unemployment, such as the fight against evictions, demonstrations in front of gas and electric companies to force the turning on of meters which they had shut off, food fights, etc., the comrades found every excuse under the sun why we couldn't carry through such struggles. In regard to evictions, they even denied that there were evictions in this district. They said that the law and the community chests prevent any family from being evicted. After a fight over this question in the open section meeting and the district committee meeting, the whole membership began discussing this question, and the day before New Year's, purely by accident, one of our comrades, in walking through the Mexican section of 'Frisco, saw furniture on the street in front of a certain house. We were notified and, with a handful of comrades, aroused the neighbourhood against this eviction. A thousand workers gathered in front of the house, a fight took place with the police, who drew guns, and finally the workers succeeded in carrying the furniture into the house again and established a picket line of neighbours for several days. It is now two weeks, and this worker is not yet evicted. The result of this fight *was that we won a victory inside the Party in turning their attention towards mass work*, and outside the Party we got our baptism as a struggle organization and not merely a bunch of talkers. I am enclosing herewith exhibits 1 and 2, which were the leaflet and petition circulated by the neighbours against this eviction. The fight over this eviction also helped considerably in making our Sacramento demonstration on the 7th whatever success it was."

I am afraid that Darcy's letter is not an exception. I doubt if it is harder to work among the unemployed in America than in Czecho-Slovakia. This is confirmed by the results of the work of Comrade Darcy in Sacramento. Evidently the work is carried on that way throughout America.

Comrade Darcy came to Sacramento at the end of December, 1930. From December 31st to January 6th the following preparational work was made for the All-American Unemployed Demonstration on January 7th. I will read a list of all the demonstrations and

meetings, because this is very characteristic and is typical of all Parties.

When they work the workers flock to them. Here is an outline of our activities since Wednesday, December 31st, 1930 :

(1) Shop Gate Meetings.

(a) S.P. shop	...	...	...	...	4 meetings
(b) Libby McNeal cannery	...	...	...	...	2 "
					<hr/> 6 "

Reached an average of 2000 workers.

Leaflets distributed, " D.W." sold, sign displayed.

(2) Flop House Bread Line Meetings.

(a) Recreation centre (flop house) (1000 workers)	...	...	...	5 meetings
(b) Bread line, Salvation Army	...	...	...	4 "
				<hr/> 9 "

Results : (1) 500 signatures collected.

(2) 27 members got in.

(3) 1500 workers reached.

(4) 150 " D.W." distributed.

(5) 1000 leaflets distributed,

(6) Signs displayed.

(3) Meetings in Front of Employment Agencies. 2 daily—altogether 14 meetings.

Results : (1) 42 members joined.

(2) 375 " D.W." sold.

(3) \$20 collections taken.

(4) Average 250 workers reached in each meeting—total 3500.

(4) Indoor Meetings. 2 meetings daily (afternoon and evening)—total 14.

Results : (a) Attendance, Full House	...	...	150-200
(b) Members taken in	...	...	72
(c) Collection taken	...	...	\$12
(d) Literature sold	...	...	\$8
(e) Total workers attending	...	...	3000
(f) Signatures taken	...	...	150

(5) Residential Section Meetings—6.

(a) North Sacramento	...	...	...	4
(b) West Sacramento	...	...	...	2
				<hr/> 6

(1) Total attendance ... 250

(2) Members taken in... 6

(3) " D.W." sold ... 12

(4) Signatures taken ... 35

(6) City Party Meetings—4.

Workers reached	...	...	...	2000
Members joined	...	...	...	27
Collection taken	...	...	...	\$9.50
Signatures taken	...	...	...	162
" D.W." sold	...	...	...	115
Leaflets distributed	...	...	...	1000

- (7) Open Forum. 2 open forums held.
- | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|--------|
| (a) Full capacity attendance | ... | ... | ... | 150 |
| (b) Signatures taken in | ... | ... | ... | 76 |
| (c) Members joined | ... | ... | ... | 16 |
| (d) Collection, literature sold | ... | ... | ... | \$6.75 |

(8) Out-of-Town Activities.

- (a) Stockton.—Campaign carried on under great difficulties. Steiner opportunist element, demoralizing organization. Unemployed council strengthened. Delegation arrived consisting of 12. 2000 leaflets distributed.
- (b) Committee of 3 with car sent to outlying towns of Marieville, Crosville, Roseville.
- (1) 2000 leaflets.
 - (2) 250 " D.W."
 - (3) 100 U.S. applications.

(9) Publicity—Leaflets.

- (a) 5 different leaflets in English.
1 leaflet in Spanish.
2 women's leaflets.
- (b) Capitalist press reached every day.
- (c) One big truck with signs going throughout city.

(10) General Accomplishments.

- | | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|
| (1) Members | ... | ... | ... | ... | 190 |
| (2) Signatures | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1098 |
| (3) Literature sold | ... | ... | ... | ... | \$35 |
| (4) Collection | ... | ... | ... | ... | \$38 |
| (5) Workers reached | ... | ... | ... | ... | 5000 |
| (6) Meetings held | ... | ... | ... | ... | 55 |
| (7) Speakers used | ... | ... | ... | ... | 14 |
| (8) One eviction case was successfully fought. | | | | | |

(11) Expectations.

10,000 workers : 2000 workers in the parade, 8000 on the sidewalks.

The result is undoubtedly very big, but the Californian district is not altogether a proletarian district, it is not an industrial district ; but if this work had been done in Detroit, Philadelphia and other places I am convinced that the results would have been the same.

It is now clear why the unemployed movement in America is on the downgrade. For a whole year the unemployed were without leadership. No work was carried on among them. How could the unemployed come to a demonstration to which the Party called them on February 25th, 1931, in the same numbers as they came last year on March 6th ?

The Nature of the Work Among the Unemployed

Now I will pass on to the nature of the work among the unemployed. I think that the kind of work among the unemployed has also been unsatisfactory. Up to the present time, in all Parties, with a few exceptions, the chief method of work among the unemployed has been abstract agitation and the organization of demonstrations.

In Germany the Unemployed Committees appoint commissions for youth, women, office workers, newspapers, for the workers who have to appeal to charity, but the nature of the work of these commissions, as far as can be discovered (the German comrades will explain in greater detail when they speak), was chiefly agitation and propaganda.

In *L'Humanité* on March 3rd there was a very interesting paragraph on the work of the Rouen Unemployed Committee. It said :

" It consists of twenty-six members. It includes an organization commission, for increasing the work among the unemployed ; a housing commission, which sees that the unemployed are not evicted ; a defence commission to protect demonstrations, and a controlling and informational commission, which watches the factories to see that there is no overtime and struggles against improper dismissals."

I do not know what these commissions do in practice, but the Rouen comrades, in my opinion, have tried out the ground for improving the nature of the work of the unemployed committee. Up to the present unemployed committees have chiefly organized demonstrations. In my opinion it is right for the committees and councils of the unemployed, in addition to agitation and the distribution of literature, to organize demonstrations and recruiting for the Red trade unions and trade union opposition, work in which the unemployed themselves are interested. I think that there are many branches of the work which could be performed by unemployed committees and councils. If the unemployed committees and councils organized housing commissions, and these housing commissions tried to prevent evictions which take place in many towns, they could get into contact with that part of the unemployed which suffers from this. The news spreads very rapidly that there is an organization which helps the unemployed, and the unemployed will unquestionably come to it. Then the defence commission, which would give legal advice and would even defend the unemployed in the labour or other courts which try cases of withdrawal of unemployment relief. The economic commission, which would collect money and organize dining-rooms for children.

Comrade Thälmann gave me yesterday a very interesting report of a session of the Central Unemployed Committee in Germany. Several comrades spoke there, and stated that the National Socialists, and in some places even the Social-Democrats, are trying to hang on to the unemployed movement, that the National Socialists are even organizing kitchens for the unemployed and for youth. They do this very badly at present. They compel the youth who come to eat there to work, and this, of course, is not very attractive for the youth. But if they open kitchens and give dinners free, or almost free, then we shall hardly be able to stop the hungry workers going there.

(Comrade THÄLMANN : There are already such kitchens in the Ruhr.)

Our American Party has not been able to prevent the unemployed

from taking charitable relief in America, and will not be able to do so. The unemployed organizations (committees and councils of the unemployed) can collect money from the employed workers and organize kitchens, even if only for children. This must be done by the economic commission. But how? The committees and councils of the unemployed must emphasize in their agitation that such kitchens cannot reduce the need of the unemployed; they must not forget our general slogans of social insurance; and finally, they must establish a general control of the employed and unemployed workers in these dining-rooms, so as not to allow them to cause more harm than good. We must be very cautious with such dining-rooms. Nevertheless, it seems to me that the committees and councils of the unemployed must commence to organize these dining-rooms, first of all for children, through the economic commissions, which will have to be formed. They can help us in the work among the destitute unemployed. The organizations of the unemployed will draw in those sections of the workers who are on the brink of want; they will connect up with the unemployed movement. The organizational commissions—for the organization of processions, demonstrations, the campaigns to present demands, as in America, where they collected signatures for the insurance bill (the commission for collecting signatures there exists quite separately from the leadership of the unemployed workers, from the unemployed committees). The organization commission could have many other functions.

The picket commission would organize pickets in factories where there is a strike. Pickets of the unemployed and strikers are of great importance for carrying out the slogans given by the Communist Party, urging a common struggle of the workers and the unemployed. Our Parties have achieved something in carrying out this slogan. In many cases the unemployed movement has joined up with the employed workers. The workers who see that the unemployed are standing in pickets and do not let strike-breakers pass, and do not take the job in place of the strikers, will unquestionably link up with the unemployed movement and will help it.

The control commissions. It seems to me that the example of the Rouen comrades is of great importance. If there were such control commissions to see that the workers did not work more than seven or eight hours, so that there would be no overtime work, or if any factory is preparing to introduce increased rationalization, on these grounds it would be possible to mobilize the unemployed so as not to allow it. This is a new form of struggle, no less important than demonstrations.

Finally, the trade union commissions. In my opinion the tasks of the trade union commissions are very important.

Firstly, they must find out who are members of a trade union and try to get them on to our side. But this is not the most important thing. The chief thing is to organize the members of reformist and other trade unions, to tell them everything which their unions are doing, make them disposed to work with us; to send them to trade

union meetings to call upon the trade unions to demand a seven-hour day without reduction of wages, not allowing wage cuts, not permitting overtime work or new rationalization. This is not the same thing as the previous "*zwing die Bonzen*" (compel the trade union bureaucrats to fight). No, it is not the same thing. When unemployed members of a trade union come to trade union meetings and put forward demands which are understandable by the workers I am sure that they will get a majority at these meetings. The reformists will not carry out the demands; the trade union opposition and the unemployed members of the union will find it easier to fight against the trade union bureaucrats.

When the ground is prepared in this way, the slogan may be put forward "Join the Red Unions, Join the Trade Union Opposition, Throw Out the Reformist Trade Union Bureaucrats," etc., according to the conditions, the time and the place. In this way we weaken the reformist trade unions and break down the authority which they have in the eyes of the men and women workers. This is a big field of work. Will this work be easy? No, it will not be easy, but undoubtedly difficult. Why? Because the unemployed is a fluctuating element—here to-day, and to-morrow in another place. We need to seek for them and catch them. But if there are so many members of the Red trade unions who are unemployed, so many supporters of the Trade Union Opposition, and so many unemployed Party members, the Communist Party can organize them. They must be united; they must work actively in the committees and councils, on the unemployed councils, and in the commissions. The unemployed committees and councils at the present time united hundreds and thousands of the unemployed. When they begin to work better they will attract still more unemployed. If all the commissions work well, especially the trade union commissions, a great deal can be done (however, during the last year work has slackened, even in the reformist trade unions, in such countries like England, America, Czecho-Slovakia, Sweden and Norway, and even in Germany), while the Social-Democrats and reformists in all these countries continually and OPENLY betray the interests of the working class on questions which can be understood by the masses. Therefore it is necessary to increase the work inside the trade unions so as to expose the trade union bureaucrats. For this purpose we should also use the unemployed.

The work of these commissions, as I have shown, will provide activity of the councils and committees for the unemployed, because the workers cannot endlessly march in demonstrations at the call of the unemployed councils and committees, and they must not limit their functions merely to this. If committees and councils of the unemployed are organized, and the workers see that they are organizations which defend their interests, the Communist can penetrate into the midst of the working masses through them. Besides the commissions mentioned above, committees and councils of the unemployed must form an agit-prop and a cultural and educational committee,

which must publish papers, organize short courses, distribute literature, etc.

*Right and "Left" Sectarian Deviations in the
Work Among the Unemployed*

In spite of the fact that up to the present time extensive organizations of the unemployed have not been formed in all countries, in the activity of the existing unemployed committees and councils there has been in some countries "Left" sectarian and right deviations from the general line of the C.I.

In some places the unemployed attacked the peasants who brought products to the city markets, and took their products without payment, and it is not always the rich peasants who haul their goods to the markets. There have been cases when the unemployed attacked little bread shops. Such "confiscation" will feed no one, or but a few people, but it can antagonize the poor and middle peasant masses, while it is very important for them to take a friendly attitude to the unemployed movement and to the workers' movement in general. There have been cases when the Trade Union Opposition, the Red trade unions, the committees and councils of the unemployed, which are under the influence of Communist Parties, have put forward only local partial slogans, not linking them up with the general slogans of the Communist Party in the struggle against unemployment (insurance against unemployment to the extent of full wages at the expense of the employers and the Government), nor with the general struggle of the whole proletariat of the given country, which is opportunism in practice.

How many committees of the unemployed are there, and how many unemployed do they include?

As far as I have been able to discover in the five countries which I have mentioned here, where there are legal Communist Parties and where the unemployed movement is also legal, there are: in Germany, 1400 unemployed committees, elected by about 300,000 to 400,000 workers; in Czecho-Slovakia there are about 1100 unemployed committees, which at the outside represent 150,000 unemployed; in America in November, 1930, at the Plenum of the C.C., it was stated that a few dozen committees existed, with 2000 members. (Evidently, at the present time, since February 25th the American comrades have extended the network of unemployed committees.) In England there are 152 local unemployed organizations, with about 20,000 members. Recently the English comrades have increased the unemployed organization (in September, 1928, it had only 8000 members).

WHAT FORMS OF ORGANIZATION OF THE UNEMPLOYED EXIST UP TO THE PRESENT TIME?

IN FRANCE, in the Paris district, there are forty-five committees. They have already a united committee. In other towns in France there are also unemployed committees, but in France they have not yet made a serious start to include and organize the unemployed.

IN ENGLAND the unemployed movement has existed as an independent movement since 1921. In the local unemployed organizations there are members of the organization paying membership dues. Until recently their chief work consisted of defending their members in the administrative organs which deal with the affairs of the unemployed (not looking after all the unemployed, but only after their own members—the unemployed organizations until recently were merely the lawyers for their members in all courts which deal with the affairs of the unemployed). Their external activity consisted of organizing unemployed processions (hunger marches). In reality this was a UNION of the unemployed, a sectarian organization caring after its own members. Only recently, when the Communist Party began, under great pressure, to deal with the unemployed movement, the leaders of this organization began to unite the unemployed movement with the Minority Movement and the movement of the unemployed with the movement of the employed for a common struggle. And this has already given good results by increasing the membership. On February 21st–23rd this year there was a congress of the unemployed in Britain. According to the decisions of this congress the character of the unemployed movement and its methods of work will be changed. The unemployed movement is closely connected with the Minority Movement. In Britain there is a general national executive committee of the unemployed.

It is difficult to say what are the forms of the organizations of unemployed in AMERICA. Comrade Bedacht, who reported at the Plenum of the C.C. in November, 1930, on unemployment, stated :

“ The leadership of the unemployed movement must be completely and also formally in the hands of the T.U.U.L. and the revolutionary trade unions.” (Retranslated from Russian.)

It seems to me that this is what killed the unemployed movement, because there are few Red trade unions there. They have very few members. Comrade Foster reported at the same Plenum of the C.C. that the Red trade unions and the T.U.U.L. are not going forward, but backwards all the time, and, as the unemployed movement was linked up with badly functioning trade unions and the T.U.U.L., this movement did not extend widely. Only after the Plenum of November, 1930, the Party organizations began to pay attention to the unemployed movement, under the pressure of the C.C. (a further rôle was played by the fact that International Unemployment Day—February 25th, 1931—was approaching), and they increased their work among the unemployed. Without this the demonstrations on February 25th could not have gathered 300,000 people.

In New York the unemployed councils were formed under the Red trade unions : needle workers, sailors, restaurant workers, office workers, metal workers, etc.—and in addition there were formed territorial unemployed councils. No All-American centre of the unemployed has yet been formed.

In GERMANY, in addition to unemployed at the labour exchanges,

there are also groups of the revolutionary Trade Union Opposition. In the last report of the German unemployed centre it says that such groups number 600, with 30,000 members.

Thus in Germany the unemployed movement is an official part of the revolutionary Trade Union Opposition. Out of more than five million unemployed in Germany about 300,000 to 400,000 unemployed took part in the election of 1400 committees, and 30,000 unemployed are in the trade union opposition. Besides unemployed committees which were elected at the labour exchanges, there are also unemployed councils in the wards, towns, districts and provinces parallel to the existing organizations of the Red Trade Union Opposition.

In Germany there exists also an All-German Committee of Unemployed, elected at a conference of representatives of the local unemployed organizations.

In CZECHO-SLOVAKIA the unemployed movement commenced as an extensive movement. Comrade Gottwald yesterday reported on this. At first the Red unions took no part in the movement whatever. It was organized by the Party organizations. Only now the Red trade unions want to fix themselves on to this movement and to make it an official part of the Red trade unions. The C.P.Cz. succeeded in doing something for the unemployed, and owing to energetic and capable work among them an extensive movement resulted. The unemployed committees which were elected at meetings of the unemployed in various places (at the labour exchanges, in communes, in wards and districts, etc.) are organized in town, district or county organizations. The National Unemployed Congress of Czecho-Slovakia, which took place recently, elected a central committee of unemployed.

WHAT FORM OF ORGANIZATION OF THE UNEMPLOYED SHOULD BE RECOMMENDED TO THE COMMUNIST PARTIES, THE RED TRADE UNIONS AND THE TRADE UNION OPPOSITION, ESPECIALLY IN THOSE COUNTRIES IN WHICH ORGANIZATIONS OF THE UNEMPLOYED HAVE NOT YET BEEN FORMED (FRANCE, ETC.) ?

The unemployed movement must have a broad basis, it must embrace all the unemployed, irrespective of the party or trade union they belong to. It is not a matter of organizing unemployed unions, of close organizations, but of organizing a wide unemployed movement. The unemployed committees and councils must become the leading bodies of the movement and be responsible to it. Hence we must determine what the relations between the unemployed organizations and the revolutionary trade union movement should be.

It is not a question of the formal connections between the unemployed movement and the Red trade unions or Trade Union Opposition. In actual practice the driving force, the foundation of this movement must be the Red trade unions, the Trade Union Opposition or the Party. The members of the Red trade unions, the Trade Union Opposition and the Party must be united and must act in an organized way in all places where the unemployed gather together.

Comrade Thälmann told us yesterday that the reformist trade

unions are already discussing the question of the unemployed movement. The National Fascists are trying to attach to it. This is inevitable, because, under present conditions, unemployment is not a passing phenomenon. Therefore we must work very energetically among the unemployed.

This movement must be non-party, not attached to any party, nor to any kind of trade union. Take Czecho-Slovakia or Germany. The workers in Germany consider the Trade Union Opposition to be an organization of the C.P.; the Red trade unions in Czecho-Slovakia are looked on by the workers as unions of the C.P. If the unemployed movement is attached to the Red trade unions in Czecho-Slovakia or to the Trade Union Opposition in Germany, then every one will count it as a Communist movement, and this will frighten many workers who follow the reformists, etc., away. Even in France every one knows that the Red trade unions belong to the C.P., and these unions have publicly stated this scores of times in their arguments with the Syndicalists, who are fighting against the Communist Party having the dominating influence in the trade unions.

If the unemployed organizations become known as being "Under the Red trade unions," "Under the Trade Union Opposition," the members of the reformist trade unions may not enter this organization, and the supporters of the Catholic centre may also not enter. There is no need to speak about members of other parties. In Czecho-Slovakia, where there are thirteen trade union alliances, where every party has its own trade union alliance, naturally their members cannot enter such an unemployed organization. If the unemployed movement is wide and free, formally not attached to any party or trade union organization, then every unemployed worker can join it. It will only be possible to include the wide masses of the unemployed in these organizations if they are not labelled as "unemployed movement under the Red trade unions," or "under the Trade Union Opposition." Of course I am not opposed to the Party and the Red trade unions leading this movement. On the contrary, the leadership must be strongly in the hands of the Trade Union Opposition or the Red trade unions, even more strongly than it has been up to the present, and, of course, in the hands of the Party. For this purpose no label or title is needed, but efficient energetic work in the spirit I have shown here. Then there will be no force, no party which could get the unemployed movement out of our hands.

It is stated that, if the unemployed movement is not under the Trade Union Opposition or the Red trade unions, then there may arise a cleavage between the employed workers and the unemployed. This argument is very serious. The strength of the unemployed movement in 1930 and 1931 lay in the fact that from the very start it was linked up with the workers in the factories. This connection was established, of course, not because the unemployed movement was under the Trade Union Opposition or the Red unions (in Czecho-Slovakia it was organized by the Party over the heads of the Red unions, and in

America the unemployed movement was wasted away and has not had any strong contacts with the employed workers, in spite of the fact that it was under the Red trade unions and the T.U.U.L.).

Evidently this does not guarantee that the unemployed movement will not be separated from the struggle of the whole proletariat. For this purpose it is necessary for the unemployed movement to be under proper leadership (through members of the Party, the Red trade unions and the trade union opposition)—the leadership of the C.P. If the committees and councils of the unemployed send pickets during a strike, this will link up the movement of the employed and the unemployed. Campaigns and demonstrations should be organized and carried through together. This is very important, because the C.P. must not allow any split between the employed and unemployed, because there is a danger that, when workers strike, let us say, against wage cuts, the unemployed in countries where there is no unemployed insurance may take their place, and in this way they can break any strike. Up to the present the unemployed have not only refused to break strikes, but they have actively assisted them, owing to the fact that the C.P. was the initiator in creating the unemployed organizations. If work among the unemployed is increased, if agitation is not abstract, if the work of the committees and councils is made very concrete, and if all the unemployed can enter the unemployed movement independently of their party or union, then the unemployed will in the future as well, far from becoming an impediment in the struggle of the working class, be active participators in it.

Is there any need for a national C.C. of the unemployed? In the minutes of a session of the C.C. of the unemployed in Germany comrades stated that they feared the existence of a separate unemployed organization. Yesterday Comrade Gottwald expressed the same fear. In this they were quite right. We must not form an isolated organization of the unemployed; therefore, in my opinion, we should not form a national C.C. of the unemployed organizations. Maybe it would be useful if the committees of the unemployed were united into councils of the unemployed of the town, district, province, or possibly the State, because they have State assemblies and legislatures, etc., where the unemployed organizations can put forward their demands, etc.

I do not propose to dissolve the German, British or Czech central committees of the unemployed, but need our comrades in France, for example, form such a committee? In my opinion they should not. The unemployed should be organized in the framework of the administrative unit of each country on a scale not larger than the province or State, with the exception, possibly, of Germany, where there are separate republics, such as Saxony, Bavaria, etc., with their own parliaments, budgets, etc., to which the unemployed can present their demands. For such organizations of the unemployed there is a field of activity.

But what work can exist for the committees of the unemployed on a national scale? There is no such work. Who formulates the

demands for the unemployed? The Party, the Red trade unions, or the Trade Union Opposition. Who represents the interests of the unemployed? The Party, the Party press, the Communists in Parliament, etc. The experience of work among the unemployed in all countries is not yet very large. For that matter, in Britain our Party has carried on work among the unemployed for ten years, because all this time there have been over one million unemployed in England. The British experience shows that we should not form either a union of unemployed with membership dues, etc., nor a central committee. The League of Unemployed in Britain, as I have already said, reached 5000 members in 1928, but its executive committee led the organization by circulars from the centre, and in this way it fettered the initiative of the local unemployed organizations, which waited for instructions from the centre, with the result that the unemployed movement did not extend as widely as it should; the unemployed League in Britain became converted into a sectarian body with membership cards, membership dues, but without mass work and without influence on the broad masses of the unemployed. If the comrades in the localities had developed their initiative without waiting for instructions from the centre, if they had worked among those sections of the unemployed who receive the smallest doles, among the most destitute, then they would have had an extensive movement. But this was not done. We must avoid the English experience and not form central committees, but develop wide initiative in the localities. We should form secretariats under the central leaders of the Red unions and the Trade Union Opposition specially for work among the unemployed. This does not mean, of course, that we must not call national unemployed congresses to formulate demands, or to support these demands.

Conclusion

I think that it would be a good thing if the commission, on the first point in the agenda of the Plenum, considered the question of the forms of organization of the unemployed, because the problem of the unemployed at the present time is very real. There are about 35 million unemployed men and women workers. Up to the present there is no political party, no trade union, except the Communist Parties and the Red trade unions and Trade Union Opposition, which go to any trouble for the unemployed. The C.P.s, the Red unions and the trade union opposition have the fullest possibilities of organizing the unemployed for a common struggle along with the workers in the factories. Up to the present time this possibility has not been fully utilized either by the C.P.s or the revolutionary trade union movement, while the unemployed are already falling into the clutches of charitable organizations (America). Among them is being spread the legend of "dumping" and "slave labour" in the U.S.S.R. In case of war they will be called up to the army first of all. The Fascists and the National Fascists are already trying to strengthen themselves amongst the

unemployed. In addition, many millions of unemployed will still go back to work. If the C.P., the Red unions and the Trade Union Opposition carry on work among them, we can improve through them our connections with the factories.

We must deal very seriously with the organization of the unemployed, draw them into the general struggle of the proletariat more energetically than we have done up to the present, and out of their ranks we must increase the Red unions, the Trade Union Opposition, and even the C.P. The chief thing to be avoided when organizing the unemployed is the formation of sectarian leagues of unemployed. We should not have compulsory membership dues and membership cards, although we should register the unemployed in the committees and collect GENUINE VOLUNTARY SUBSCRIPTIONS from the employed workers, and even among the unemployed who are receiving unemployment pay.

The primary elected organs of the unemployed (committees) must be elected at meetings of all the unemployed, independent of the parties or trade unions to which they belong; at the labour exchanges, flop houses, food lines, etc. The committees will have to report on their work to all the unemployed. Only with such an organization the unemployed movement will not have a sectarian character, but will be extensive. Our slogan calling for a common struggle of the unemployed and the employed workers, in spite of the fact that up to the present the work among the unemployed has been very poor, has given fine results. Up to the present the unemployed have not been strike-breakers, even in countries where they do not receive the dole and where the proportion of organized workers is not very large, as in America. This common struggle should be increased still further.

Now I wish to pass on to a summary of the work of the Communist Parties and Red trade unions in the factories in capitalist countries.

2. THE WORK OF THE COMMUNIST NUCLEI, ETC.

Party Nuclei in the Factories

How do matters stand with regard to carrying out one of the important slogans which is set out in all the chief decisions of the Comintern, the R.I.L.U. and their sections—the transfer of the centre of Party and trade union activity into the factories?

I will give statistics once more for the same five legal Parties—the C.P.s of Germany, France, America, England and Czecho-Slovakia—which will answer this question.

Up to the present very little attention has been paid in the discussion to the foundation of the Party, or, at any rate, what should be the foundation—the factory nucleus. Only Comrade Thälmann made a slight reference to this. Here are the statistics. In my opinion there is no other way of deciding how we have consolidated ourselves in the factories.

THE NUMBER OF FACTORY NUCLEI AND STREET NUCLEI AND THE NUMBER OF MEMBERS IN THEM

GERMANY.—The number of factory nuclei was :

1926		1928		1929		1930
2243	...	1556	...	1411	...	1524

In addition there were fifty-seven nuclei on big estates. Previously there were no such nuclei.

(During the election campaign for the Reichstag 188 factory nuclei were formed.)

The number of street nuclei in the C.P. of Germany was :

1925		1929		1930
110	...	2519	...	2824

The street nuclei increased between 1929 and 1930 by 305, while the factory nuclei in the same period increased only by 113.

THE PERCENTAGE OF PARTY MEMBERS INCLUDED IN FACTORY NUCLEI DURING THE LAST FOUR YEARS IN THE C.P. OF GERMANY

1927		1928		1929*
15.61%	...	18.96%	...	14.7%

We have not yet exact figures for 1930, but probably the percentage was greatly reduced, as is shown by the statistics on the number of Party members working in industry, compared with 1928 and 1929.

In the C.P. of Germany the proportion of the total number of members who were working in factories was :

1928		1929		1930		1931
62.3%	...	51.6%	...	32.2%	...	20-22%

(The reduction in the number of Party members working in factories must be attributed to dismissals in connection with the crisis, first of all of the revolutionary workers—members of the Party.)

The following figures, showing the fall in the number of Party members working in the factories for the six chief districts in 1930, are interesting compared with 1929 :

District	Dec., 1929		Oct., 1930	
	%		%	
Berlin-Brandenburg	56.0	...	45.4
Halle-Merseburg	60.3	...	34.5
Wasserkante (Hamburg and other ports)	53.5	...	38.2
Saxony	57.0	...	40.0
Ruhr	44.3	...	24.4
Lower Rhine	41.8	...	22.7

In 1929, in 1411 factory nuclei, as I have already said, there were only 14.7 per cent. of all the Party members ; in 2519 street nuclei there were 45 per cent. of all the Party members, and in 2175 local organizations, in which there are no factory nuclei, street nuclei and nuclei in the estates (there were in all 2779 local organizations in the C.P.G. in 1929), there were 40.3 per cent. of all the Party members.

* 1929 figures based on data from 12 biggest districts.

Here is the distribution of Party members in 1929, among factory, street and local organizations where there was no nucleus, for ten districts of the C.P. of Germany :

District				In factory nuclei	In street nuclei	In local orgs., without nuclei
				%	%	%
East Prussia ... ..	...	...	...	9.59	48.99	41.41
Danzig ... ..	...	...	...	5.82	38.73	55.44
Halle-Merseburg ... ..	...	...	...	13.59	33.27	53.13
Thüringia ... ..	...	...	...	10.51	37.79	51.69
Mecklenburg ... ..	...	...	...	10.70	59.9	30.84
North-West ... ..	...	...	...	14.70	45.57	40.35
Ruhr ... ..	...	...	...	34.12	58.2	7.76
Hessen-Frankfurt ... ..	...	...	...	4.19	59.51	46.29
Baden ... ..	...	...	...	14.05	31.12	54.82
Southern Bavaria ... ..	...	...	...	6.15	57.93	35.92

In the Ruhr a great part of the Party members are organized in factory nuclei. Among the above-mentioned districts I have not mentioned some important industrial districts, such as Berlin-Brandenburg, but in general this distribution of Party members in the factory nuclei, street nuclei and local organizations without nuclei can be considered to be the general feature for all the other districts.

CZECHO-SLOVAKIA.—In the C.P. of Czecho-Slovakia in 1926 there were 1301 factory nuclei; in 1928 there were 954, and in 1930 there were 399. The number of Party members in them constitutes 14 per cent. of the total membership. The number of street nuclei in 1928 was 639, and in 1930 it was 360. In 1930, 33 per cent. of the Party members were in street nuclei, and 53 per cent. in local organizations without nuclei. This means that in Czecho-Slovakia the greater part of the Party members, the overwhelming majority, are not in factory nuclei.

U.S.A.—The factory nuclei of the C.P. of U.S.A. numbered in 1927, 166; in 1928, 111; and in 1930, 133. (They included approximately 10 per cent. of all Party members. In 120 factory nuclei there were 989 Party members.) Street nuclei in the C.P. of U.S.A. in 1928 were 468, and in 1930 there were 417. At the end of 1930 there were 10,768 members. If we count that in 133 factory nuclei in 1930 there were 1268 members, this means that in the street nuclei and local organizations there were 9500 members. The fact is that in the U.S.A. a tremendous number of Party members are not yet in factory nuclei.

GREAT BRITAIN.—In the C.P.G.B. at the beginning of 1930 there were 44 factory nuclei, and in September, 1930, there were 39. In them were 218 Party members. In November, 1930, out of 2555 members of the Party, 1376 were working in factories, 845 were unemployed and 334 were housewives.

Comrade Pollitt gave other figures, but they were for the last few months.

We have no information on the number of street nuclei in the

C.P.G.B., but in England there are 118 concentration groups, in which there are 851 members of the Party, of whom 323 work in factories.

FRANCE.—We have no complete figures for the C.P.F.

In 1928 the C.P.F. had 898 factory nuclei, with 17,488 members, which forms 33 per cent. of the total number of Party members. (At that time the C.P.F. had 52,372 members.)

We do not know how many factory nuclei there were in 1929, but they had 10,800 members, which was 24 per cent. of the total membership. In 1929 the C.P.F. had 45,000 members. The large percentage in factory nuclei is very striking, but this is explained by the fact that they attached 15 to 18 members to every six members working in factories, so that this does not mean that they really had such a large percentage of Party members actually working in the factories and included in factory nuclei.

In 1930 the C.P.F. had 666 factory nuclei, of which 134 were in the Paris district. The number of members in them is unknown.

The number of street nuclei in the C.P.F. was :

1928		1929		1930
2410	...	No data	...	1837

In the street nuclei and local organizations without nuclei there were in 1928 34,927 members, which comprised 67 per cent. of all Party members, and in 1929 34,200, which is 76 per cent. In 1930 the C.P.F. had 38,240 members, but we have no information as to how they are distributed among factory nuclei, street nuclei and local organizations without nuclei.

Yesterday Comrade Thorez said nothing about this in his speech. Possibly the other French comrades who have yet to speak will tell us.

WHAT IS THE SIZE OF THE FACTORY AND STREET NUCLEI ?

In Germany we have figures only for 1929. The number of nuclei in the C.P.G. was as follows :

No. of factories with nuclei		Membership of the factory nuclei		No. of street nuclei		No. of members
761	...	Up to 10	...	1216	...	Up to 20
240	...	" 15	...	559	...	" 30
154	...	" 20	...	305	...	" 40
123	...	" 30	...	160	...	" 75
56	...	" 40	...	158	...	" 100
31	...	" 50	...	6	...	Over 100
36	...	Over 50	...	—	—	—

Total 1411 factory nuclei

2404 street nuclei

If we take statistics for 1931 and the last months of 1930 the proportion of Party members in street nuclei will be bigger because unemployment has recently greatly increased. The C.P.G. has several times split the street nuclei into smaller ones because they have very many members. Now I have been told by several German comrades that they have again started to increase the number of street nuclei so as to reduce the number of members in them, or they are preparing to do so.

We have no full figures showing the number of nuclei in the C.P. of Czecho-Slovakia. We have figures from nine big factories, with 59,000 men and women workers. At these factories the number of workers varies from 1000 to 18,000. In all these factories there are nuclei of nine to 60 members each. Only in one nucleus are there 250 members. In all these nuclei there are 505 Party members. Comrade Gottwald did not deal with this matter in his speech yesterday.

GOTTWALD : I could not finish my speech yesterday because the session closed.

PIATNITSKY : No one deprived you of the floor to-day and you could well have continued this morning. You said you would speak later. It will be a good thing if you would do so, and if you would descend a little lower than the Central Committee and tell us what is happening in the nuclei.

In the C.P. of the U.S.A. from three to 18 members form a nucleus. In the C.P.G.B. from four to six members on the average form a nucleus. This does not mean that there are no more members in some nuclei, but on the average they are very small.

In France, in the Citroen works, with over 15,000 workers, there is a nucleus of 15 Party members. In the Reno works, where 15,000 also work, there is a nucleus with 18 members. In Boulogne, at the Farman, Carno and Salmson metal works, each employing some 1500 to 2000 workers, there are only nine Party members (not in each of them, but for the whole six factories). In St. Etienne (Lyons district), out of 24,000 miners, there are 24 Party members. It is not known whether they have nuclei or not. In the 15th Party district, at the Tallbeau works, etc., where there are 60,000 metal workers—

(Voice : In the whole district.)

In the whole district, I say, there are four factory nuclei, in which there are 10 members.

The figures are taken from the materials of the C.C., C.P.F. Notice that all the documents which I quote here and all the figures which I give are taken exclusively from the documents of the central committees or the reports of the instructors of the E.C.C.I.

IN WHICH FACTORIES ARE THERE NUCLEI ?

We have only the 1929 figures for the C.P. of Germany :

Factories with nuclei			No. of workers		Factories with nuclei	
					%	
33 out of	71	...	Over 5,000	...	46.4	
328 "	1,051	...	1,000 to 5,000	...	31.2	
245 "	1,780	...	500 " 1,000	...	13.7	
702 "	40,188	...	50 " 500	...	1.74	
103 "	148,112	...	10 " 50	...	0.06	
<hr/>						
1,411 factory nuclei						
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Thus 1411 factory nuclei are distributed as follows : 1050 nuclei

are in small and medium factories, with 10 to 1000 workers ; 361 nuclei are in factories with 1000 to 5000 workers or more.

CZECHO-SLOVAKIA.—We have no figures for 1930 except the nine factories which have already been mentioned. In 1929, out of the total number of Party members working in factories, 67 per cent. were in factories with 50 to 100 workers, 20 per cent. were in factories with 100 to 1000, and only 1 per cent. were in factories with over 1000 workers.

C.P. OF U.S.A.—As a general rule the Party members are working in small and medium factories. Only a few Party members are working in big factories. Out of 133 factory nuclei, 120 were in factories with a total number of 517,410 workers.

FRANCE.—Out of 134 nuclei in the Paris district (according to the figures of the Paris district committee) "many" are in small and medium factories. In St. Etienne, out of 23,000 metal workers in factories with over 500 workers, there are only 17 Party members. In the eastern district, including Moselle, in which is concentrated the steel production of the whole of France, there are three nuclei. At the Schneider and Creusot factories, with 11,000 workers, there is not a single Communist.

C.P.G.B.—No data.

The Trade Union Opposition and the Red Trade Unions

Matters are still worse with regard to the transfer of the centre of trade union work to the factories. The Red trade unions and the trade union opposition in Germany have not yet formed their groups in many factories. The Trade Union Opposition has not yet formed groups in all the factories where the C.P.G. has nuclei, and where the Trade Union Opposition put forward its lists in 1930 for the election of factory committees. The Red trade unions of France and America and the Minority Movement in Britain have no solid position in the factories.

In Czecho-Slovakia on December 31st, 1930, the Red trade unions had groups in 144 factories, and trade union delegates in 18 factories (there is no information as to in which factories and how they work). The Trade Union Opposition in Germany set itself the task of organizing groups in all the factories where lists are put forward this year in the elections for the factory committees. If they carry out this task they will make a tremendous step forward, but, unfortunately, there is no possibility as yet of speaking of a strong basis in the factories even in Germany.

HOW DO THE FACTORY NUCLEI WORK? We have documents which show that in all countries a few nuclei are working well, but the majority of factory nuclei are, unfortunately, passive and work badly.

I wish to quote some documents showing how the good nuclei work, because many comrades have talked a great deal about the nuclei but know very little about how the nuclei work. I will quote a document from one comrade, an instructor of the E.C.C.I., who was in France

and took part in the work of the factory nuclei. He saw this work and described it as follows :

" The only organization in the district (Boulogne) which is doing serious work is the nucleus in the Reno factory. Eighteen Party members, of whom eight are foreigners, are divided into four shop nuclei organized in the chief shops in the factories. The nuclei have a common bureau consisting of four secretaries of the shop nuclei and a constant worker from the district committee (a member of the district committee) attached to the nucleus

" The nucleus, although its numbers are small, nevertheless tries to establish direct contacts with the factory and tries to lead the struggles of the workers. For example, several numbers of the factory newspaper had been issued in which the demands of the workers were put forward in a general form. Every shop nucleus held a number of meetings of sympathizers, holding them illegally. All the members of the nucleus invited to these meetings those comrades from their shops whom they had succeeded in interesting by individual agitation.

" At these meetings of sympathizers, at which there were seven to twenty comrades, demands were examined, and in addition three new members were obtained for the Party, and five for the trade union.

" In the revolutionary trade union opposition there are thirty members.

" After such work carried on for a month the demands were found to be greatly concretized, both for the Reno factory as a whole and for several of the workshops in particular.

" Then the comrades issued a leaflet setting out the enlarged and concretized demands. The leaflets were distributed during the dinner interval by a brigade of about twenty unemployed, who gave them out at the four chief entrances to the factory. During the distribution of the leaflets comrades from the metal workers' union and the Party organization explained to the workers who gathered around the speakers all about these demands.

" The influence of the Party among the workers in the factory is growing. Another example which shows that, although we do not understand how to lead the struggle, nevertheless the work has already been commenced, is as follows :

" In the central tool shop, where 1000 workers are employed and where there is not a single Party member, one morning there spread a rumour that wages were to be cut. During the dinner interval two sympathizers found the secretary of the nucleus of the Reno factory and informed him of this. The comrade immediately told them to bring a few workers to a meeting. Four turned up at the meeting. They undertook to distribute in the factory the leaflets which were drawn up during the day in the district committee, dealing with the struggle against wage cuts proposed by Reno, and urging an increase. The distribution of these leaflets was carried on well, and the material made a good impression on the workers. They saw that the Communists are not working OUTSIDE THE WALLS OF THE FACTORY, but that there was an organization IN THE FACTORY ITSELF, that in the organization the WORKERS THEMSELVES WERE ACTIVE, being able to hide themselves cleverly from the factory police, of which they had heard so much. This fact greatly assisted the growth of confidence in our organization.

" The management proposed to reduce wages on February 4th, but the workers answered that they would strike if any attempt was made to cut wages.

" The nucleus set itself the task of putting forward on February 25th a platform of demands for the whole factory and organizing the preparations for the election of committees of struggle. The Reno nucleus is one of the best working organizations in the Paris district."

In such a tremendous factory, where over 15,000 workers are employed, a group of eighteen comrades, by their clever and painstaking work INSIDE THE FACTORY, had a great influence on the workers, tremendously greater than if they had worked from outside.

In Czecho-Slovakia also there are several nuclei which work well.

(a) The nucleus in Karlshutte works actively. A large proportion of the Party members come to meetings of the nucleus. The Party committee pays great attention to this nucleus.

(b) The Witkovitz nucleus before the elections to the factory committee carried on good work. The members of the Red trade unions in the factory committee carried on a struggle against the reformists in the factory committee. Their speeches were printed in the factory newspaper, *Witkower*.

(c) The nucleus at the Kolben-Prague Works from the beginning of December, 1930, carried on active work. In January, before the elections of the factory committee, the nucleus published and distributed 20,000 leaflets. In addition, the nucleus periodically publishes a newspaper with a circulation of 300 to 500, and this nucleus received assistance and leadership from the Prague Party committee.

There are very many good nuclei in Germany, but the Party press for some reason writes nothing about them. In the C.P.G. there is a special organ, *The Party Worker*, which deals chiefly with Party structure, passing on experience of the good work of Party organizations and criticizing bad work and mistakes. If we examine it for 1930 there is nothing at all in it about the work of the nuclei as a whole. There are good descriptions of how individual comrades do good work, how they take part in strikes, but no description is given of the factory nuclei as a whole, how they organize the struggle. Concerning the factory nuclei of the C.P.G., I must state that the overwhelming majority of them are passive and do not take part in the struggle in the factories, do not carry out the Party line, do not mobilize the workers. This is still our great weakness.

I have taken two facts from *The Party Worker* concerning the factory nuclei in Germany whose work is medium or bad, and I wish to read you descriptions of their weaknesses because they are very characteristic, not only for Germany, but for many nuclei in other countries. In Germany an investigation was made of the work of factory nuclei. This is a very important factory and a very interesting experience, and I recommend the Party committees of other Parties to do the same: carry on a real investigation of how the factory nuclei work.

I have reports on the investigations of two factory nuclei. I will read them.

"The investigation showed the following [unfortunately the factory is not mentioned, but the German comrades probably know and call it the O.P.]:

"During the last year the nucleus suffered greatly from internal difficulties. At first inner-Party disputes with Comrades Eberlein and

Freda Rubiner, who were attached to the nucleus, played a very important rôle, and then there were personal quarrels caused by the late secretary of the nucleus. However, in the factory, which had been for many years one of the strongholds of Social Democracy, the opposition grew very rapidly (chiefly among the turners). A few Party members gather the non-Party workers with opposition tendencies and carry on very active work among them. The non-Party oppositional workers sent a delegation to a meeting of the nucleus to criticize shortcomings in its work.

"After the liquidation of internal dissensions the nucleus, together with the non-Party opposition workers, brought about a brilliant success of the opposition at a large meeting of the workers. The number of members of the nucleus in the factory increased immediately from eighteen to thirty-two, and almost 100 workers joined the revolutionary trade union opposition. Last spring the nucleus did not put forward its Red List. Two comrades were elected to the factory committee; these comrades in general were too passive, and even made serious mistakes, which they admitted." *

Non-Party workers had to intervene to liven up the Party nucleus.

I will give the report on the investigation of the nucleus at Siemens-

P. I do not know if this is a big factory—Siemens-Halsk, Siemens-Schukert, or some other factory :

"Five comrades are working at the Siemens-P. factory, and three comrades from various factories are attached to them. The factory is completely under the influence of the Social-Democrats, because our nucleus does not carry on any revolutionary policy; 90 per cent. of the workers are unorganized and have no representatives in the factory committee. Three comrades are members of the factory committee. Last year they were elected on the reformist list. The control commission ascertained THAT THESE THREE COMMUNIST MEMBERS OF THE FACTORY COMMITTEE VOTED TOGETHER WITH THE REFORMISTS IN JANUARY FOR THE DISMISSAL OF NINETY WORKERS. At a session of the nucleus, where the control commission reported on this, the secretary, who was one of the three members of the factory committee, defended his action in agreeing to the dismissals. After a long discussion the nucleus decided at the last meeting to put forward a Red List this year. Only the secretary voted against this decision." †

I will read two more extracts as examples of the bad work of nuclei in the Paris district. The same E.C.C.I. instructor in France, and of whom I have already spoken, writes concerning the work of the nucleus at Citroen :

"The experience obtained at the Reno factory is not applied at Citroen, where nothing has so far been done in putting forward demands.

"The nucleus at the Citroen factory has fifteen members, and only last week it was split into four shop groups. The only method of contact between the nucleus and the workers in the factory is the factory newspaper and proclamations, which are insufficient if they are not only to serve as a means of agitation among, but as a means of organization of, the workers.

"A trade union section does not as yet exist.

"When discussing the question of preparations for February 25th, and of setting tasks, the members of the nucleus, who have never done any serious work in the factory, did not believe in the success of such work, however much they were assured that the comrades in the Reno

* *Party Worker*, No. 39, March.

† *Party Worker*, p. 89.

factory did accomplish certain things. It was plain that, as they had done nothing as yet, they had not the courage to start to work. At the last meeting of the Citroen nucleus two comrades from the Reno factory were present. They greatly encouraged the Citroen comrades, and the latter resolved to call a sympathizers' meeting."

Here is an extract taken from another document of the C.P.F. :

"In Chapinol, a suburb of Nancy—a workers' centre—we have a Party nucleus, but we have there also a circle of free-thinkers headed by a Communist. The Party nucleus is quite inactive, but the free-thinkers' circle is very active."

Of course, I am not opposed to the organization of free-thinkers' circles, but I think that it would be better to make the nucleus more active.

In the C.P. of Czecho-Slovakia the nucleus bureau at Pondituit does nothing, nor does the fraction in the factory committee do anything. Only five out of the twenty-eight members of the nucleus in the Prague Iron Works at Kladno do any work at all. The nucleus does not issue a factory newspaper.

I will not give any more examples of the bad work of the nuclei of the C.P. of Czecho-Slovakia.

Why did I not describe the work of the nuclei in my own words? We have often spoken and written in detail of how a factory nucleus ought to work. Evidently we were not believed, because there has been no great success in this work as yet. I have quoted the documents of the Parties themselves. In these documents are clearly shown what good results are obtained when the factory nucleus works well (Reno factory), and how bad matters are in factories when the factory nucleus does not work or works badly. Yesterday Comrade Thälmann pointed out that we cannot limit ourselves merely to nuclei in the factories, and that we need also revolutionary delegates. We need to have feelers everywhere, either in the form of factory committees or as revolutionary trade union delegates, or as delegates to anti-Fascist conferences, etc. This is absolutely right and absolutely necessary. But if factories have no Party nucleus at all, or if they have nuclei which work badly—*i.e.*, factory nuclei which are helpless and passive—how can they lead, direct, give the line, point out what to do to the revolutionary delegates, to the delegates at anti-Fascist conferences, groups of the trade union opposition and the Red trade unions and Red factory committees, or to other groups of mass proletarian organizations in the factories?

German practice (the rôle of the factory committees in 1923, when there were no factory nuclei) has shown that without nuclei revolutionary trade union delegates, factory committees and other mass organizations in the factories, with very few exceptions, will be passive; they will not know what to do in most cases. Further, if there exists a smoothly-working organization of reformists and Social Democrats, many of the above-mentioned revolutionary organizations will come under their influence and will be discredited in the eyes of the workers.

When the workers elect anyone they want to see his work ; and if the revolutionary trade union delegates, the members of the factory committee or of other organs elected by the workers vote for the dismissal of workers they will not have any authority among the workers. Of course it is not sufficient for nuclei to exist in the factories; it is necessary for them to work well. There have been cases when members and secretaries of factory nuclei have voted for the dismissal of workers in the factory committees while the nuclei have made no objection. The workers will avoid such nuclei which allow their members to vote in favour of dismissals. Such nuclei will scarcely be able to unite the delegates and other elected workers in the factory. We must activate the factory nuclei—the basis of our organizations. The Party committees should lead, control and assist them in their difficult and important work. In these factory nuclei, in spite of the fact that they are passive, there are deviations both of a " Left " sectarian character as well as of a " Right " opportunist character. For example, there have been cases when members of a nucleus were not expelled for voting in favour of dismissals. Is not this opportunism in practice of the deepest dye ? Or when members of factory nuclei will not talk to workers who are members of a Social Democratic party, or with members of the reformist trade unions ; will not carry on agitation among them and confine themselves merely to cursing them, on the ground that they are all fascized, that they have all become reactionaries, that all of them are Zörgiebls. Is not this the worst form of sectarianism ? Of course we cannot have any success among the worker members of the Social Democratic parties and the reformist trade unions if we do nothing but curse them.

Only in one Communist Party—the C.P.G.—has any work been done to transfer the centre of activity to the factory, which does not mean, of course, that in this matter everything is well with the German Party.

During the last election campaign the C.P.G. transferred a great part of its activity to the factories ; it organized meetings of workers in the factories themselves and at factory gates. During the preparations for the metal workers' strike in Berlin the district Party organizations transferred workers' meetings into the factories or near them, and this gave tremendous results. But even during the strike the work of the factory nuclei was not noticeable. It did not exist.

I have a document, parts of which I will read, a document which was well written, which gives an excellent picture of what kind of work was done by the local Party organizations and groups of the trade union opposition in this Berlin strike of 140,000 metal workers. It is in great detail, but without a word about the factory nuclei. I will only read a few of the most important parts of this document :

" After September 16th, 1930, seventy-nine factory newspapers were published (including fifty-nine in the metal works). [It does not say who published them.—O. P.] Leaflets were published by the nuclei [which nuclei ? Street nuclei or factory nuclei ?—O. P.], twenty-two of them,

with 51,000 copies. There were ninety-four factory meetings before the strike, and 122 during the strike." [It does not show who called the meetings.—O. P.]

NEUMANN : The strike committee.

PIATNITSKY : " Forty-six metal works discussed the question of the metal workers' strike. 177 manifestations took place in factories. There were eighteen factory demonstrations. There were 131 sessions of Party and trade union organs."

But not of factory nuclei. Nothing is said of them in the report. But it says that " the street nuclei agitated at seventy-eight factories and held fifty-eight meetings." The factory nuclei in the factories which struck evidently did not function at all. The other factory nuclei were not drawn into the struggle of the Berlin metal workers.

It is possible that the rôle of the factory nuclei was omitted from the document by accident, but the document speaks of everything in such great detail that it cannot be the case that its authors forgot to mention the rôle of the basis of the Party—the factory nuclei. It seems to me that the factory nuclei can function, and should function, even during a strike at their factory.

The same took place in the Ruhr province. When the miners' strike was being prepared it transpired that many mines in which there were nuclei and groups of the revolutionary trade union Opposition, and on which we counted as certain strikers, did not strike, while mines which we did not count on at all as being likely to join the struggle, and in which there were no nuclei and groups of the revolutionary trade union Opposition, struck. What does this show ? It shows that we have not yet established good contacts with the factories, and therefore the pulse of life of the factories is not taken into consideration by many of the Party and revolutionary trade union organizations.

The factory nuclei and, after them, the revolutionary trade union delegates, the groups of the trade union Opposition and the Red trade unions are working badly for the additional reason that in many Communist Parties, Red trade unions and trade union Oppositions the chief campaigns are carried on apart from the factory nuclei, Red trade unions and groups of the trade union Opposition in the factories. The C.P.G. is the only Party which has organized courses for new members. But where were these courses organized ? In street nuclei and not in factory nuclei. How could these new members, even if they work in factories, be asked to go into factory nuclei when they attend courses in the street nuclei, when they have already settled down and received some kind of duties in them ?

In his report, Comrade Chemodanov said : " How does it come about that there are no Y.C.L. nuclei in places where there are factory nuclei ? " Comrade Chemodanov, it is just because most of the factory nuclei are passive and work badly. If there were properly functioning factory nuclei in the factories there would be groups of the trade union Opposition, groups of the trade union unity and Y.C.L. nuclei. It

could not be otherwise. But, as there are nuclei which work badly, they not only fail to form Y.C.L. nuclei, but they do not even know the feelings of the workers.

I wish to say a little more about nuclei in war factories. This is a real problem at the present time. The revolutionary workers, the members of the Red trade unions and the trade union Opposition will be thrown out of them. Anyone who is connected with the Party to the slightest degree will be thrown out, if not immediately, then a little later. Therefore the work must be organized in a different way in these factories than in other factories. Maybe we should decentralize the organizations in such factories, set up groups of three, at the outside of five, who will appoint a representative for contact with the shop bureau of the factory nucleus. The nuclei will work mostly illegally, through the newspapers and leaflets. Meetings will be called not far from the factories, and the speakers will not be comrades who work in the factory.

At such factories a Party committee must be formed, to which one member of the district committee or the town committee who is well acquainted with mass work will be attached. These attached comrades must tirelessly direct this work. It is a thousand times worse to be thrown out of such factories than out of other factories, because it is harder to get into them than into other factories, even at times of good trade. The factory management and its spies will select reliable workers. But this does not mean that the groups of three or five, the shop bureau and the Party committees in these factories must be passive and do nothing so that they will not be thrown out of the war factory. They would then be useless. They must be active so that their work will be felt, but so that it will not be known who is carrying on the work. A conveyor can carry proclamations as well as machine parts. This problem must be raised and carefully studied by all Communist Parties. To remain without nuclei in war factories during a war means to have omitted the most important thing.

Now I will give the propositions which I would formulate for the improvement of the work in the factories.

The Communist Parties are faced with the same tasks as last year : the transfer of the centre of activity of trade union and Party work to the factories, for this task has not yet been carried out by far. For this it is necessary :

(1) For the Trade Union Opposition and the Red trade unions to reconstruct their work on the basis of the factory.

(2) To review all the street nuclei and remove from them all the workers who are working in factories, so as to strengthen the existing factory nuclei ; and if they work in factories where there is no nucleus, then to form nuclei there.

(3) Without giving up the efforts to attract the unemployed to the Party, the Y.C.L., the Red trade unions and the Trade Union Opposition, to increase to the maximum degree the recruiting of working men, women and youths for these organizations DIRECTLY FROM

INDUSTRY, because the economic crisis is every day throwing the revolutionary workers more and more out of the factories. (There are very well drawn up statistics in the Berlin-Brandenburg district committee on the social composition of the members who are taken in by them. Everything is written in the greatest detail; but one thing is missing—which of the new members work in the factories and which of them do not. And this is tremendously important.)

If we recruit employed workers at the present time, this means that we get into industry at the time when every worker is thinking that to-morrow he may be dismissed. The workers are not confident that they will not be dismissed to-morrow. It is easy to work with such workers in industry. I do not mean by this that we should not accept unemployed workers; unemployed workers should be accepted in all the organizations which are close to the Communist Party, and into the Communist Party.

(4) To pay attention to the improvement of the work in the existing nuclei, groups of Red trade unions and the Trade Union Opposition, and the organization of Party nuclei, groups of the Red trade unions and the Trade Union Opposition in the big factories and in the chief industries, in war factories, transport, chemical works, etc.

3. THE FLUCTUATION OF MEMBERSHIP, ETC.

I will pass on to the last question—fluctuations.

How do matters stand with regard to fluctuations in the number of members?

In the German C.P. there is a certain phenomenon which I do not know how to explain, namely, between December and January there are great variations in the number of members of the Party. The statistics relating to the number of members in the German C.P. are drawn up on the basis of the number of paying members.

During the first half of 1928 there were, on the average, 118,579 members of the Party; in the second half of 1928 there were, on the average, 124,511 members. The difference between the first and the second half of 1928 was 5,932 members.

In May, 1929, there were 105,744; in October, 98,527; in November, 113,487; and in December there were 135,160. The difference between May and December was 29,416.

THÄLMANN: Between Christmas and New Year's Day they do not pay membership dues.

PIATNITSKY: As for 1930, the figures I have are contradictory, because those given by Comrade Creutzburg, the head of the Org. Dept. of the C.C. C.P.G., on January 20th, 1931, in his report to the E.C.C.I., do not correspond with those which were recently published by the Party press of the C.P.G. Evidently the C.C. received additional information concerning the acceptance of new members by local organizations for October, November and December only in February, 1931.

In January, 1930, there were 133,000 members paying membership dues ; in May there were 121,000 ; in November, 165,000 ; in December, 176,000. (Yesterday Comrade Thälmann gave the figure as 80,657 dues-paying members at the end of December, 1930. This same figure appears in the Party press of the C.P.G.) The difference between January and December is 43,000, and between May and December it is 55,000. If we consider that in December there were 180,657 members, the difference between May and December will be 59,657 members. At the end of 1928 the C.P.G. had 124,511 members. In 1929 about 50,000 members were accepted. There should have been that year 174,000, but in December, 1929, there were only 135,160 members. THIS MEANS THAT 39,000 PERSONS LEFT THE PARTY.

The fluctuations in 1930 are very striking if we take the quarterly figures. In the first quarter 23,548 new members were accepted ; in the second quarter 15,588 were accepted ; in the third quarter 39,106 ; and in the fourth quarter 64,844—a total of 143,086, *i.e.*, more than there were in the C.P.G. at the beginning of the year. In January, 1930, the Party had 133,000 dues-paying members. If to this we add 143,086 who were accepted during 1930, we get 276,056. But at the end of December there were only 180,657 members, which means that during 1930 the number of members who left the Party was 95,399 ! It is true that the number of new members who remain in the C.P.G.—47,657 members—is approximately as many as the total membership of the C.P.s of France, England and America together. But the tremendous number of 95,000 members went back. There are very good symptoms during the last two months. Yesterday Comrade Thälmann said that at the end of February the C.P.G. had 206,000 members. In December there were 180,657 members ; in January, 1931, 19,820 were accepted ; in February evidently 5,523 were accepted, which makes a total of 206,000 members. (I do not know exactly how many were accepted in February.) This means that fluctuations considerably decreased for these two months in 1931. Previously there was an increase from October to December because the Party members paid their membership dues better, but commencing with January there was a fall lasting till the middle of the year. Membership dues were paid most of all in the last two months of every year. If in January and February this year the number of members did not decrease, but on the contrary increased, it means that the fluctuations in January and February have grown less. If the C.P.G. can put a stop to fluctuations it will obtain tremendous successes, because an inflow of 143,000 members during the course of one year shows that the Party has enormous attractive force. I think that some of the workers who left the Party could have been retained. I shall speak of this again.

The C.P. of Czecho-Slovakia. At the beginning of 1929 there were 81,432 members in the Party. This is a figure which the present leaders do not question. Previously they gave bigger figures. In October, 1929, there were only 48,000. In the first quarter of 1930 there were 30,212 ; in April, 24,000 ; in May, 35,593 ; on July 1st,

1930, 37,181; in the fourth quarter of 1930 there were 37,998. And now the Czech comrades say that they have about 40,000 members.

The number of members accepted this year is a secret. We do not know it. The number who left is also unknown to us, but I am convinced that there are great fluctuations in the C.P.Cz.

GOTTWALD: Ten per cent.

PIATNITSKY: Gottwald says 10 per cent., but I think that it is still more. But even that is good, and the Party has scored a great success in ceasing to go downwards, and instead of that has risen ever since April. I must say that, if there is now an inflow of members into the Party and the trade unions, it is because the C.P.Cz. has worked well among the unemployed. The workers saw that this is the only party which is really fighting for the proletariat, but not because the Red trade unions of Czecho-Slovakia have worked well. I would not say that. Let Comrade Zapotovskiy, who is here, tell us how work was carried on among the workers by the Red trade unions in 1930. It will be very useful.

C.P. of Great Britain. We have information from six districts out of nine. In the period from May to November, 1930, 423 members joined these six districts, and 518 left. Apparently things are slightly better in the C.P.G.B. now. It has accepted about 300 members more, but I do not know how many have left, and Comrade Pollitt did not say anything about this in his speech yesterday.

C.P. of U.S.A. In October, 1929, there were 8,800 members of the Party. From December, 1929, to July, 1930, 7,178 members were accepted. This means that there should be 15,978, but in July, 1930, there were 10,768 members. Thus 5,210 members left the Party (1,010 old members and 3,200 of the new members).

C.P. of France. I have no exact figures. We have had to search for the figures. The situation is as follows: in 1929 the Party had 45,000 members; in 1930 it had 38,240 members; in 1931, 35,000 members. For the same years, the Y.C.L. had: 1929, 7347 (the figure given by Comrade Chemodanov); in 1930, 6000; and in 1931, 3350 members. However, the C.P.F. is taking in new members all the time, and in spite of that it is going downwards. This is not only true of the Party and the Y.C.L.; the same is taking place in the Red trade unions. I cannot give the exact figures for the fluctuations in the Red trade unions, but there are many documents speaking of a decline in membership, and the leading comrades of the unions openly talk about it. And this is taking place at a time when the proletariat of France are fighting, wish to fight, when a mass of strikes are spontaneously breaking out.

What are the causes of the fluctuations? Yesterday Comrade Thälmann pointed out that fluctuations take place because the street nuclei and the factory nuclei work badly. I should like to extend this formulation. It is not only the nuclei which "work badly."

THÄLMANN: They are one of the most important factors.

PIATNITSKY: Of course the nuclei should be the basis of the Party.

But in most cases the district committees and the town committees and the provincial committees work badly, and sometimes we may go even a little bit higher—the Central Committee. (*Laughter.*)

THÄLMANN: And still higher. (*Laughter.*)

PIATNITSKY: Comrade Thälmann points to us. I should be the last to say that I or comrades like me always do what is necessary at the right time to signalize mistakes in the work of the local Party organizations of the sections of the C.I. We are guiltless of the sin of claiming this. But, commencing from 1924, we have all the time been talking and writing in the Party press and in the letters and documents to the central committees of the Communist Parties on the necessity of transferring the centre of activity of Party and trade union work into the factory, and of the necessity of improving the work of all units of the Communist Parties, Red trade unions and the Trade Union Opposition. I can confirm that which Comrade Thälmann said yesterday, and which we agreed upon long ago, namely, the conclusion that fluctuations are caused by bad work. I will try to prove this by documents from the C.P.s themselves. One of the causes of fluctuation is undoubtedly unemployment. There is tremendous unemployment among Party members, even in Germany. If in Germany only 20 to 22 per cent. of the members of the Party in 1931 are working in factories, that means that 78 to 80 per cent. of the members are unemployed. They travel from district to district, from town to town, and part of the members are lost. But unemployment is not the chief reason for the fluctuations of the members. If all sections of the Party and trade union organizations worked well it would be possible to attract the unemployed Party members into work at least among the unemployed, into the unemployed committees, give them Party papers, leaflets, etc., to distribute. They might be used on Party and trade union work, and in this way we could keep contact with them. The chief cause of fluctuations among the members is undoubtedly the bad work of the Party and trade union organizations and organs.

Here is a short quotation from America:

"The comrades of the Chicago district, for example, point out that one of the sub-district organizations, which includes the biggest industrial centres (*e.g.*, St. Louis, with a population of over one million), carries on all the work itself and has not yet succeeded in forming a collective leadership in the form of sub-district committees with departments.

"In a number of districts the district organizers are approximately at the same level of development. In some sections, such as Seattle, Kansas City, Butte, Denver, etc., the whole of the work of the organization is on the shoulders of one person—the district organizer. He distributes the *Daily Worker*, goes round to workers' houses, speaks at street and factory meetings, etc. The comrades here have not yet solved the question of how to bring in new elements to the work of the district organization, and in this way to improve and lighten the work of leadership."

CAN WE DEVELOP EXTENSIVE ACTIVITY OF THE PARTY ORGANIZATIONS AND DEAL WITH ALL THE WORK IF WE ORGANIZE IN THIS MANNER?

Of course not. Here is an extract from the report of Comrade Martin at the secretariat of the C.C., C.P. of France. (He was sent by the C.C. C.P.F., as an instructor in the coal district of Gare—the Languedoc Party district.) He writes :

“ Although I expressed my impressions of the coal district of Gare to the secretary of the district committee, it will also be useful to inform you of the situation of the Party organization there. The situation is pitiful. There is no other district where we have such great possibilities of strengthening our organization and where we have shown such a lack of ability to utilize the situation. Sixteen municipal councillors and twelve Unitarian miner delegates are representatives, chiefly on paper ; they do very little that is really practical if we look at their activity from the point of view of the Party line.

“ OUR PARTY HAS NOT A SOLID BASIS IN THE FACTORIES. We have seats in the municipalities, but the Communist line is not carried out there.

“ The leadership of the district is extremely weak. The secretariat has no authority among the elected representatives, nor influence among the masses.

“ . . . The miners' delegates have much free time which could be used by the Party organization. However, nothing is done in this direction.

“ . . . The delegates regularly put questions to the miners. Then they write a report to the prefect, and that is all. If the prefect does not reply to the report the delegate writes another letter.

“ . . . During the catastrophe at Alsodorf and Saar I demanded that the question of these catastrophes should be put on the agenda of all nuclei, the trade union sections and factory meetings, and that this question should be examined from the point of view of the general situation of the miners at Gare. However, this was not done.

“ . . . It would be difficult to have a more favourable platform for a trade union and Party campaign in order to form committees of struggle. However, nothing was done. . . . The chief blame belongs to the leaders of the trade union and the leaders of the district Party organization. No one gives the necessary directives to the delegates.

“ . . . Our municipal councils are scandalous. No one can distinguish them from the bourgeois municipal councils. There is no Communist work. In the Communist municipalities inertness and passivity is so great that the priests have a predominating influence. The district Party organization, which does not give the necessary directives, is chiefly to blame.”

The situation in the Eastern and the Lyons Party districts and in the Troye district is not much better. I have here the reports from many Party districts which were sent to the C.C. I will not read them all ; I will only give a few excerpts from the documents of the Paris Party district. I will give extracts from the discussion at a session of the bureau of the Paris Party district on February 25th, 1931, on the trade union question.

The secretary of the Paris district, Comrade Selor, said :

“ You have not yet made businesslike preparations for a struggle. The work is being carried on badly. You have lost members and, in addition, there remain tendencies to work passively. For the taxi drivers at the end of September, 1930, we proposed at one meeting to form a commission to work out the demands for the abolition of the percentage basis of pay. And what have we done all this time since the end of September ? The question has not even been raised before the workers.

“ . . . Among the leather workers and fur workers we agreed to put

forward the usual annual demands of the bootmakers when the busy season starts. What is the situation now? The time when these demands should have been put forward has been allowed to pass.

" . . . I should add that the demands have nowhere been passed on to the masses. During the last few months nothing has been done anywhere to form a strike fund.

" Conclusion : Phraseology, wordiness, are becoming ever more deeply rooted. This must cease ; otherwise the situation for us will be the same as in August, *i.e.*, our work will be empty and we shall not make an effective step towards the preparation of struggles."

This was said by the secretary of the Paris region, Comrade Selor. I think that comment would be superfluous.

At the same session Comrade Semard stated :

" In the 20th district organization (Paris district) and in the trade union movement no advance has been made, because we have not been able to overcome our weakness from the point of view of organization and the leadership of the work.

" . . . All this arises from the fact that we are badly lagging behind from the point of view of our methods in the trade union movement."

After all this can we wonder that

" . . . in previous years we had no time to change the membership cards for the navvies because the comrades came to the trade union office in such great numbers. This year, on the contrary, the comrades do not come to us." These are the words of Arachard, from the minutes of the District Bureau of the Paris Party district on January 13th, 1931.

and that

" . . . the membership of the 20th district of the trade union organization (the Paris district) has fallen. We are finishing the year with a reduction of 20,000 supporters."

These are not my words ; it is the statement of Comrade Murrat from the minutes of the District Bureau of the Paris Party on December 23rd, 1930.

One more small quotation from the report of the instructor of the E.C.C.I. :

" The leaders of the Paris district must without question carry on a great deal of work, because the district gives the impression that it has been without any leadership until very recently. It is true that Selor is now there, and he takes his work seriously."

I could quote similar documents from all the Parties of the C.I. in capitalist countries.

Neither the Communist Parties nor the trade union opposition and the Red trade unions, nor the Y.C.L., with few exceptions, have yet succeeded in utilizing to the necessary extent the growing dissatisfaction of the working and peasant masses in connection with the world economic and agrarian crisis, owing to the insufficient or bad work of the local Party, trade unions, Y.C.L. and other kindred organizations. Therefore it is not surprising that there is such a great fluctuation in the membership of all Communist Parties, Y.C.L. organizations, Red trade unions and other mass organizations.

In the C.P. of Germany measures have been taken to reduce fluctuations. The mere fact that short courses have been organized for new members, which has not been done by any other Party—at any rate, I do not know of any—attracts a large proportion of the members into the work. But in other Parties, unfortunately, this does not take place. Hundreds of thousands of non-Party workers actively assist the Communist Party in election campaigns and during strikes, but many of them have not yet joined the Party and the Red trade unions. Many of them who do enter the C.P. and the Red trade unions afterwards leave them because they expect from these organizations militant activity, while in many cases our organizations function badly.

What should be done to reduce fluctuations ?

(1) Improve the work of the nuclei, district committees, town committees and provincial committees.

(2) Set practical work for the new members.

(3) Form circles and short courses for the new members.

(4) Instruct the Central Committees of the Communist Parties to study the causes of fluctuations and to remove all causes which make it impossible for Party members to remain in it.

(5) Reconstruct the system of statistics of Party members in such a way that it will be seen how many members are in the Party, how many pay membership dues, and, chiefly, HOW MANY HAVE BEEN DRAWN INTO ACTIVE PARTY WORK. The greater the proportion drawn into Party work, the smaller will be the proportion of those who leave the Communist Party. We can and must keep such statistics.

The general conclusions from all that I have said to-day are as follows :

(a) The bad work of the Party organizations increases fluctuations and prevents us from bringing in the militant revolutionary workers.

(b) The absence of a great change in the matter of transferring the centre of activity of Party and trade union work to the factories does not really make it possible for the C.P.s, the Red trade unions and the Trade Union Opposition to fight against the influence of the Social Democrats and reformists in the factories, to enlarge their membership by an inflow of workers from the factories, to know the feelings of the workers, to organize the struggle against the attack of the capitalists. When the active elements of the C.P., the Red trade unions and the Trade Union Opposition are removed by the bourgeoisie during the time of war the only possibility for successful work in the industrial centres, in the factories, will be on condition that there are well-functioning nuclei (the revolutionary delegates in Berlin during the World War of 1914-18 carried on a tremendous amount of work, and they showed how necessary it is to have revolutionary organizations in the factories).

(c) The absence of strong and energetic committees and councils of the unemployed, and of systematic work among them—abstract slogans and abstract agitation among the unemployed, the prevalence of demonstrations while other forms and methods of concrete work are not adopted—does not make it possible to organize the broad masses

of workers for the struggle, to recruit them into the Red trade unions, the Trade Union Opposition and other mass organizations, and into the Party.

(d) In view of the weakening of the work in the reformist and other trade union organizations, the absence of the systematic publication of factory papers and the wide distribution of the Party press, which, unfortunately, does not increase, but decreases, we have not been able organizationally to seize on the growing political influence of the Party among the masses.

(e) We must make determined efforts to abolish these phenomena which prevent us bringing about a real change in Party work, in the work of the Y.C.L., the Red trade unions and the Trade Union Opposition, so that the C.I., the R.I.L.U. and all their sections will be able successfully to organize, lead and carry to victory the proletariat in the coming struggles against the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie for the dictatorship of the proletariat.

